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Source: *The Journal of Race Development*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jul., 1910), pp. 86-109

Published by:

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737849>

Accessed: 15/07/2014 09:35

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THE PRESENT SITUATION IN INDIA

By Dr. John P. Jones, Madura, India

An address delivered at Clark University during the Conference
upon the Far East.

India is the great Eastern dependency of the British empire. In area it is equal to one-half of the United States of America. Its population is four times that of this country and one-fifth that of the whole world. It contains more than three-fourths of the whole population of the British empire.

It has more races than all Europe; and they speak one hundred and forty-seven languages, of which twenty-two are mother tongues, every one to more than one million people.

Half a century ago the British government assumed control over that land from the great East India Company, which had directed its destiny for a century. This transfer was caused by the terrible mutiny which nearly cost Great Britain the control of that country.

At present two-thirds of the area and four-fifths of the population are directly under the British crown; the remainder being Native States (675 of them) under Indian rulers, and ranging from a kingdom as large as the German empire to a petty state of only a few square miles. These Indian kings administer the internal affairs of state, but under British suzerainty and with no right to treat with foreign powers.

The government of India is perhaps the most elaborate and complicated among all civilized states. Its laws have, as their basis, the ancient Hindu code of Manu and the Mohammedan codes of later date. But they are interpreted and have been largely transmuted by Anglo-Saxon Christian conceptions of justice and of right.

It is appropriate in a discussion of the Far East to open with a consideration of India, which I regard as the most important of all those wonderful lands. It is preëminently the land of thought and the mother of religions. One-third of the population of the world follow the faiths to which she

gave birth. Her philosophies are the great store-house for Eastern thought. And to-day her influence upon the thought of the West is far beyond that of any other land of the East. One of the leading theologians and philosophers of America recently said that within twenty-five years from this, Indian speculation would largely dominate American religious thinking. However that may be, we know that, at the present time, not a little of our recent religious thought, in this country, has come to us directly from India. The monism which gives character to much of our modern theological thinking has been inspired by, if not transferred bodily from, the Vedantism of India. Christian Science is but the ideal philosophy of India unequally yoked to a type of Christian thought and sentiment. Theosophy is another of those Eastern products which have come with assertion to this country to captivate and bewilder not a few of our people.

A Westerner can speak of the situation in India with perhaps less confidence than of that in any other land of the Far East, for the situation is a more complex one. India is under the rule of a foreign people; and her destiny is in many respects largely shaped by them. Yet there is little intercourse of thought between the rulers and the ruled. These two people are antipodal in thought and life. Nor has the West seriously aimed to understand the mind of the East and to accustom itself to the Indian view-point. Great Britain has sought to study how to control and dominate, rather than to understand the mind and the thinking processes of the people of her great dependency.

Indians, on the other hand, are expert in concealment. They are the most secretive of all people. A Hindu naturally evades the inquiry of the man of the West, and finds delight, like Brahm itself, in hiding himself behind a rampart of silence, or of equivocation.

Moreover, to one who tries to speak of India, there arises, as an obstacle, the great gulf which separates the classes from the masses in India. Much of what one may predicate of the former is untrue of the latter. On one side we find abject poverty, on the other comparative wealth and oriental

luxury. Here we meet with profound ignorance, there with growing intelligence and culture; here with contentment, under modern conditions; there a seething mass of unrest. Thus in attempting to describe the situation in that land one is always liable to have his statements denied and his diagnosis questioned.

Even after a residence of thirty-one years in India, during which time I have been a close and deeply interested student of the situation there and have lived intimately with the people, identifying myself largely with them in their ambitions and finding my chief delight in having a small part in promoting their progress in all the best things of life—even now I dare not speak of the situation in that land with confidence.

Many declaim against British rule in India, abusing the English for their direction of life and thought in that land during the past fifty years of occupancy. Notwithstanding this, I believe that India, as a whole, has profited immensely by the union of her destiny with that of Great Britain.

Not that Great Britain has done the best she could for India, for many a time her purposes have been selfish; and she has allowed India to be exploited by her politicians for the pecuniary aggrandizement of British trade interests. One may justly accuse her of permitting some of India's old arts and crafts to be destroyed by unhealthy western competition. She has doubtless subjected herself to the charge of promoting trade in intoxicating drinks and of creating, for the sake of the revenue involved, a host of drunkards in that land of sobriety.

Nevertheless, I believe that Great Britain has been constantly growing in the seriousness of her purpose to render the best service she can for India, and to remove every selfish barrier between her rule and the highest prosperity of that people. I do not think that those who best understand the British mind to-day, can question for one moment the purpose of the British people in general, and of the government in particular, to deal justly with India, and to make their union a source of lasting blessing to that land and people.

In one particular, doubtless, the presence of the British in

India, has been an injury to the people. Under long British dominance the people of India have lost much of the vigor and power of initiative which characterizes a free people. They look too much to the foreigner for leadership and inspiration. The inevitable consequence has been that modern civilization, with all its manifold forms of life and progress, has been thrust upon them from without, more than it has been the spontaneous development of the life from within, as in the case of the Japanese. Thus progress has possessed for them hardly one-half the blessing which it has for the Japanese. It does not have the true ring of sincerity or the potency of a hearty and self centered and self propelled power. This, of course, is more a statement of the situation than a reflection upon the British Raj.

I purpose to devote our time to a consideration of the situation in India from several successive view-points.

I. THE PRESENT ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL SITUATION IN INDIA.

There are a few striking and significant facts which confront us in connection with the economic situation in that land.

India has always been a land of poverty. It has had, and now has, riches; but they have always been unevenly distributed. Side by side have existed squalid poverty, and princely, irresponsible wealth. This poverty is truly appalling. Millions at present, as in the past, live there on the border land of want and hunger. The average income in India is only ten dollars per capita a year; and what shall we think of those who live below this average and who are rarely free from the pangs of hunger?

But this poverty is rather diminishing. The writer has seen there constant evidence of a general advance in life. The luxuries of thirty years ago, among the lower classes, have become the necessities of the present day. Life is becoming more complex, and its horizon wider than in the past. In the city of Madura, where I have lived, the wage of the laboring man continues to increase. The crops of the

farmer, in like manner, realize more than ever before in the market. And it should be remembered that nine-tenths of the people of India are connected with agriculture. During the last quarter of a century, one-half of the city of Madura has been torn down and replaced by new structures of treble the value of the former. General prosperity is the characteristic of the day—prosperity, of course, upon these lower ranges of existence.

It should also be remembered that the poverty of India is largely self-imposed, and has less to do with the government than many think. Sir Mahdava Rao, one of the few modern statesmen which India has produced, once said that “The longer one lives, observes, and thinks, the more deeply does he feel that there is no community on the face of the earth which suffers less from political evils, and more from self-inflicted, self-accepted, or self-created, and therefore, avoidable evils than the Hindu community.”

The remarkable fact has recently been announced by an expert on Indian affairs that \$2,600,000,000 of hoarded money is buried under ground in that land—the inherited habit of the people as a result of their mutual distrust. This suggests that the people may not be as poor as is often claimed; it also means that this very hoarding of so much money, without use or increment, contributes to the poverty of the land.

Another cause of this poverty with which I am only too familiar, is the insane passion of the people for litigation. Under slightest provocation they rush to the courthouse for redress and squander their property among the lawyers. India is the paradise of the lawyer and his tout.

Add to this the enormous wealth which is annually converted into jewels, even among the common people; wealth which is not only unproductive, but which is also one of the most fertile sources of crime throughout the land.

Moreover, one must remember the senseless waste of money in connection with marriage compacts and festivities; the stupid and universal craving to contract debts upon which ruinous usury is paid, and the willing maintenance of five

and one-half million religious ascetics who are not only non-productive and useless in the community, but are also in the main a moral pestilence in the land, Much of the poverty of India can be traced to the above mentioned sources.

It is common for Hindu radicals to make political capital of this poverty, and to blame the government for its existence. Yet the Parsee chairman of the Bombay Stock Exchange, in his annual address, recently, said that "it was the conviction of merchants, bankers, tradesmen and captains of industry that India is slowly but steadily advancing along paths of material prosperity, and, for the last few years, it has taken an accelerated pace." Note also the testimony of the "*Imperial Gazetteer of India*" which is highest authority upon this subject:

The total value of Indian imports and exports rose in the sixty years ending with 1903-4 from 28 to 246 crores (a "crore" is equal to ten millions) of rupees. Although the population of India still consists in the main of a poor peasantry, great strides have been made in the development of her resources, and her national wealth is growing apace. This economic progress has been accompanied by an enormous rise in the revenues and expenditure of the state. The gross revenues of India amounted to 21 crores in 1840-1, to 43 crores in 1860-1, to 70 crores in 1880-1, and to 113 crores in 1900-1.

The following statement of Lord Curzon, in his farewell speech, as he left India, is worth adding to the above:

The capital sunk by government in railways and irrigation works has increased by 56 per cent in that interval; that is, during his Viceregal term; that invested by joint stock companies in industrial undertakings by 23 per cent. The savings bank deposits have gone up by 43 per cent; the private deposits in presidency banks by 75 per cent; the deposits in other joint-stock banks by 130 per cent; the deposits in exchange banks by 95 per cent; the amount invested in local authorities' debentures by 90 per cent.

That the agricultural classes, though poor, are not becoming impoverished may be proved by statistics. In 1880 there were only 194 millions of acres under cultivation. Now the total cultivated area is about 220 millions of acres. In 1880 the yield per acre of food crops was 730 pounds; but, in 1898, due to better irrigation and improvements in agriculture, it rose to 840 pounds per acre. The increase being practically in the same ratio as the increase in the population, there could have been no diminution of agricultural income per head of people.

It is true that valuable industries of past centuries in India were allowed to die out during the last hundred and fifty years. It is not to the credit of Great Britain that it did not protect and foster those old crafts, but left them to be swamped by incoming foreign products. But the government of India is now awake to the error of that policy, and is striving hard to revive the defunct and decadent, and to nourish the infant, industries. There are now 136 technical and industrial schools in India, while schools of arts are found at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Much more needs to be done along these lines.

The evidences of material progress, such as the creation of an immense system of 200,000 miles of roads and 30,000 miles of railways, and the postal and telegraph departments, are marvelous, not only in the material blessings which they bring, but also in the moral, social, and civilizing power which they represent.

I must also emphasize the incomparable irrigation works of India. It surpasses all other lands in this particular. By the Chenab irrigation scheme alone, in the Punjab, two and one half million acres of wasteland, without an inhabitant, have been recently transformed into a fertile garden with two hundred thousand inhabitants. In the district in which I live in South India, the Periar irrigation scheme, completed a decade and a half ago, feeds four hundred thousand people, and has made the district which was formerly dependent upon other districts for food, to be more than self-supporting. Millions are being expended annually by the Government in its irrigation schemes.

And yet India has been, and continues to be, a land of terrible famines. Its meteorological conditions are such as to bring drought and distress, if not famine, to more or less limited areas of the country every year. There is not a season when some part of India does not suffer from want of rain, and consequent failure of crops. Other nations hear of it only when the suffering is widespread.

Famines have always existed in India. The difference between the famines of the past and those of the present is that in those days they were largely unrecorded, and the

people were left to perish or to descend into the horrors of cannibalism. To-day the government pours its millions of money into the famine affected areas to save the people; and the "Famine Assurance Fund" of the state enables it to relieve increasingly every year the distress and suffering of those who live in drought and famine areas. Even remote sections of the land are now being pierced by "famine protection" railways, which will render past famine horrors impossible.

The taxes of that land are hard for the common people to bear. Yet it is a fact that they were never taxed less, and in a less exasperating way, than at the present. The problem of maintaining that complicated and highly efficient government by taxing the poor is indeed a serious one. Recently our collector of internal revenue in the Philippines told me that the same problem worries, and will increasingly worry, the government of our new dependency. Any tax upon so poor a people would seem to be cruel; yet how is the state to be maintained without it?

In the taxation of India there are certain facts which all must keep clearly in mind. The first is that the government and the people of India pay absolutely no direct toll or royalty to Great Britain. The second is that the average land tax of India is only $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the gross crop. In America many think that the Indian government takes 50 per cent. This was the old system of India; but, before the government takes its share, to-day, it grants to the cultivator a reasonable amount from the produce for all expenses connected with its cultivation. And the result of this is, as we have said, that the average tax upon the gross produce is only $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The state also makes extensive remissions in seasons of drought.

The salt tax of India, which has always been regarded as the most obnoxious of all, because it affects the necessities of human life, has been steadily reduced, so that to-day it only amounts to six and one-half cents per capita, annually, assuming that every man takes his twelve pounds of salt a year. It should not be forgotten that this tax is the way by which the government reaches

millions of the people who otherwise would not pay a cent towards its maintenance. The total tax of India is, according to latest statistics, only one shilling and nine pence, say forty-two cents, per capita. This is only four per cent of the average per capita income of \$10 in that land. This is certainly not excessive. It is ten times less than that of any civilized Western land, and much below the taxation of the Japanese. The people of Great Britain are taxed \$10 per capita. It is indisputable that, compared with the amount of return in protection and blessing from the state, Indians pay very much less now than at any other time in their history, and far less than other civilized people.

And among the blessings which the people enjoy from the state none is more valuable than *Pax Britannica*—that long continued internal peace to a land which was formerly in the perpetual throes of devastating wars.

There is doubtless a serious financial drain caused by the large amount of money which is annually carried from India to Great Britain in the form of pensions for retired officers of the Indian service, and as interest on English moneys invested in the country. This may be regarded as a necessary evil in the economic condition of a foreign rule.

Still it should be remembered that those pensions have been well earned by a long period of service rendered by these Anglo-Indians in the tropics—a service which I well know to have been both faithful and arduous. And I know of no service more needed by India to-day than that of English civilians, who by their lofty integrity and official probity present to the country a high and much needed standard of official service. Nor should it be forgotten that the English money invested in India has been an unspeakable blessing to that land. The interest obtained on these investments is small. An Indian writer wisely said that English money and Indian labor are the two cheapest things in the world's market, and are the best combination for service and power in the world.

II. THE SOCIAL SITUATION.

Some progress is manifest in the social life of India.

The joint family system, which obtains there, among all the Hindus, at least, is giving way to the growing tide of modern progress. According to this system three generations live under the same roof, with common purse and control. That plan of life has served fairly well during the past; but it is inadequate to meet the growing demands of modern life and the new emphasis given to individual worth and responsibility. A few years ago, at the instance of Indian lawyers and men of wealth, a new law, called "The Gains of Learning Bill," was introduced and carried by a substantial majority in the Madras legislature. By this law every individual would be enabled to call his own, all the property and wealth accumulated by him through his own industry. Owing, however, to a great uproar raised by Hindus against the bill, the governor never signed it, and it has therefore not become a statute. But men of education are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the joint family system, which denies to them the right to own any property in their own, as distinct from the family name.

Slowly the disabilities of woman are being removed and her condition ameliorated. The friends of India, however, need to exercise infinite patience in this matter, in view of the unwillingness of the people, and, strange to say, of the educated classes, to release woman from her bondage and her disabilities of the past.

Sporadic efforts are being made to remove the curse of infant widowhood. But, here again, though the evil is so palpable and widespread and the injustice to the child-widow is so gross, very little has been achieved in order to put an end to this evil. There are voices crying in the wilderness. But India continues to be a wilderness of indifference in this matter.

The dedication of infant daughters to temple service is always definitely known to mean their dedication to a future life of shame. The voice of the West has been unanimous in its protest against this curse entrenched within the Hindu

faith; and a few Indians, also, have protested against this brutal injustice to these innocent girls. Yet, until recently, practically nothing had been done to arrest this injustice. I am glad to say, however, that a few months ago the native state of Mysore took a bold lead in this matter, enacting a law prohibiting the services of such girls in connection with its temples, and thus striking at the very root of the evil. Mysore is one of the most advanced native states in India; and I trust that its example in this matter will be speedily followed by the British government and by other native states.

Still, the condition of womanhood in India is most deplorable. The attitude toward her, educationally, has been well expressed by the vernacular proverb which says that "To educate a woman is like putting a knife into the hands of a monkey." To-day hardly seven women out of 1000 can read and write. The whole proverbial literature of India is strongly suggestive of the exceeding low estimate of woman, and of the popular opinion that she is to man a temptation and a curse, rather than a blessing. I am glad to say, however, that educated India to-day is beginning to realize that the condition of its womanhood is the truest barometer to the general condition of the people of a land; and that woman must be brought side by side with man himself in the possession of rights and privileges and blessings, if the country is to attain unto highest prosperity and independence.

The great caste system of Hinduism largely dominates the whole social fabric of that land. It even gives some color to the social life of the Mohammedan community also. As for the two hundred and thirty million Hindus, they are the abject slaves of this most colossal social and religious tyranny which the world has ever known. It is the stereotyped gradation of society into innumerable inelastic divisions which depend upon birth, and which are enforced by all the penalties of society and of religion.

Whatever of blessing it may have brought to India in the past, to-day it stands as the greatest barrier to the social and political progress of the whole people. It is verily a millstone about their necks. It has anchored them to a

mean past and aims to deny to them the least blessing of progress. It is the foe of democracy, as it is the enemy of individual rights and liberty. So long as the caste system prevails in India, individual freedom and national self-government and independence will be impossible. Dr. Bhandarkar truly said—"The caste system is at the root of the political slavery of India." Thank God that its tyranny is gradually relaxing and its dominance is becoming less pronounced. I have heard Brahman gentlemen publicly declaiming against the whole caste system, and proclaiming the impossibility of India's independence so long as this dominance prevails. How indeed can a people progress and prosper who are enslaved by a social system which was propelled and stereotyped twenty-five centuries ago, and which has borrowed all the penalties of religion to enforce its command, and has exercised its tyranny with a view to crushing individual ambition and human aspiration and initiative?

The Social Reform movement has, unfortunately, lost much of the power and popularity which it possessed twenty-five years ago. The reactionary spirit among educated Hindus, during the last two decades, and the divisions in the Social Reform movement itself have brought that organization into disrepute and have robbed it of much of its power and ambition. Still, it is keeping before the educated classes an ideal of better things; and I trust that the day will soon come when the political ferment in the land will not tell so strongly against social progress, and will permit of a new revival of interest in the social amelioration of the people. At present, the educated men of India are so absorbed in their search for political power, that they are impatient with any one who preaches to them that truth of fundamental importance, that a wise exercise of political rights is impossible to a people who do not enjoy the highest and broadest social blessings and privileges.

III. THE RACIAL QUESTION

The present condition of unrest in India is largely owing to the want of harmony which exists between the races there,

especially between the Anglo-Saxon and the Indian. Little progress has thus far been achieved in the way of reaching a mutual understanding, and a *modus vivendi*, between the conflicting races of East and West. This is a difficulty for which both parties are to blame. In the first place, the proud, haughty Anglo-Saxon, the Western Aryan, has gone to the East with a mighty conceit of himself, which is only equalled by his contempt of the people whom he has made his subjects. He rarely tries to conciliate them, or reveals sympathy with them. He rides rough-shod over their deep-seated prejudices and Oriental convictions. He is possessed of the arrogance begotten of a sense of his military prowess over those whom he has defeated in war.

On the other side stands the "Aryan brown," the Brahman, who has ruled, for millenniums, the people of India in thought, faith, and politics. From all classes he has received the homage of a divine being. In his way, he is the most arrogant human on earth. His antecedents of three thousand years have given to him a colossal sense of his own importance in that land. He not only despises all other peoples of India, he regards as polluted and polluting his fellow Aryan of the West. Personal contact with the white man is religious contamination, to be removed only by extensive ablutions.

Can these two paragons of pride live together? This is the problem. The Western people have quickened within many of these men of the East a consciousness of their own dignity and rights, racial, social and political. They must also give to them respect, honor and esteem. The East also must cultivate an appreciation of the West.

It is of fundamental importance that the great gulf which exists between the two races be appreciated. Kipling has well said:

"The East is East and the West is West;
And never the twain shall meet,
Till earth and sky stand presently,
At God's great Judgment Seat."

In temperament as well as in antecedents, in view-point and in racial sensibilities, these two peoples are antipodal; and

they should understand this fact and not belittle the problem which they have to solve in their coming together. The Englishman has mistaken his mission to a no small extent in that land. In Kipling's own words:

"It is bad for the Christian's peace of mind,
To hustle the Aryan brown;
For the Aryan smiles and the Christian riles,
And it weareth the Christian down.
And the end of the fight is a tombstone white,
With the name of the late deceased,
And an epitaph drear, 'a fool lies here
Who tried to hustle the East.'"

Now the Englishman, and I fear the American too, has had too much of the idea that he is in that land to "hustle" the people, to stir up "the mild Hindu" to more energy; and not the rather to thoroughly understand him, and to kindly lead him into sympathy with himself, and to an appreciation of his motives and purposes.

The East and West certainly can come together, however fundamental the differences which now separate them; but it must come, as the Prince of Wales recently said, through sympathy and through mutual appreciation.

"For there is neither East nor West,
Nor border, nor breed, nor birth,
Where two strong men stand face to face,
Though they come from the ends of the earth."

For the settlement of this race question, the "Aryan White" of the West must take the initiative. He must abandon the arrogant conceit that we, The Whites, are superior beings to the Yellow and to the Brown races; and he must remember also that in the East we have as much to learn as we have to teach.

So far as the Oriental is concerned he is exercised by the birth of a new consciousness of his manhood. The West has been trying to teach this to him for many years. He has learned the lesson and has come to rightly assert his manly dignity, and to claim a kindly and an equal treatment at the hands of the people of the West.

A recent writer in the London *Times* seems to have awakened to a partial sense of the situation. "Our rule," he says, "is disliked, not because it is bad, but because it is alien; and if we were a race of administrative archangels, the situation would be very much the same. Our difficulties in the future are likely to arise in a great measure because we are reluctant to recognize this tangible fact. We want to be loved for our good works; yet it is not our works, but our presence that is chiefly resented." And I may add that his presence is resented partly because, with all his justice and kindness, he does not yet understand the people, and does not seek to be understood by them.

The same racial feeling exists between the Hindus and Mohammedans. There seems to be a permanent racial tension and antipathy between these two classes, though a vast majority of Mohammedans are converts from Hinduism. The followers of the great Prophet reveal sentiments toward Hindus which are unfriendly in their character. In the present unrest the Mohammedans have stood firmly with the English. They would vastly prefer to be governed by the British than by Brahmans. And this racial division between Hindu and Mohammedan is one of the strong guarantees for the perpetuation of British rule in India.

IV. THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

We, in America, have recently heard more of the political tension in India than of anything else pertaining to that land. Personally I believe that it is not as deep or as fundamental in its character as the racial difficulty.

In order that one may realize the political situation in India, he must first remember the great difference between the position of the masses and of the classes. The common people of India are, now, on the whole, more contented with their government than they ever were before. It is the classes, rather, who reveal the real spirit of discontent. Not two per cent of all the people in India belong to this party of unrest. After considerable investigation of this subject, I am confident that this percentage is a high estimate of the

number of those who are deeply dissatisfied with the British Raj. If the common people were let alone by the agitators there would not be a more loyal people on earth than the people of India. They realize to some extent that it is the best government that they have ever lived under; and it must not be forgotten that the people of India have almost always lived under an alien government. Even if their rulers have not always come from outside the peninsula, they have been members of an alien race within the country, and have revealed little sympathy with the people.

But the educated classes are certainly possessed of a new ambition, politically, and will no longer remain satisfied with inferior places of responsibility and lower posts of emolument than are enjoyed by the foreigner. The reason for this is not far to seek.

Great Britain has been faithful to her trust. She has brought to the people the best that she possesses in all forms of life and activity. She has introduced her Western system of education. In the two hundred colleges that are connected with its five universities there are thousands of young men undergoing training. A host of these are sent forth as Bachelors of Art and Bachelors of Law every year, equipped with Western ideas of human rights and freedom, and inspired with an Occidental sense of individual responsibility and initiative. They seek those political rights and privileges which their Western teachers have emphasized as the inalienable rights of men of thought and culture. But they soon discover that the highest political positions and most responsible posts of honor in their government are held more frequently by the foreigner than by their own people. Is it strange that they become dissatisfied under such a régime?

Moreover, Great Britain has already given to India a no small meed of Representative Institutions. In the more than eight hundred municipalities in India the people are allowed to elect the majority of the commissioners. Today, the majority of the members of the nine provincial legislative bodies are non-officials and more than one-third are elected by the people. In the supreme government as in

the provincial governments natives now find a place, as they do also in the Council of the Secretary of State in London.

Consider also the wonderful liberty of the press and the right of free speech enjoyed by that people. Until the recent Unrest, when it was found that the whole vernacular press was sowing broadcast the seed of bitter disloyalty and sedition, there was not a land outside of America and Great Britain where press and platform were so unhampered as in India. And it was a liberty such as the press of India had never before known, and is not known today in any Native State in that land. It is not strange that they abused these privileges and had to be deprived of some of them by special law during the recent strain.

And as for free speech, what people enjoy it more fully than the inhabitants of India, even now? Look at that remarkable institution, the "National Congress." For twenty-two years has this great annual assembly of some three to five thousand discontented men of education been allowed to meet and to pour forth, in choice and eloquent English, many bitter charges of cruelty and injustice against the government, and afterward to publish and spread them broadcast all over the land! The very *existence* of the Congress is a marvelous testimony to the tolerance of the state as it is to the degree with which the government has already trained the people to the exercise of the most precious and most advanced rights of democracy. In what European country outside of Great Britain would such an institution be permitted to exist even for a day?

It should also be remembered that no form of representative institutions were known in India prior to the British occupation. In pre-British times India had experienced only an absolute and autocratic government. The Laws of Manu and the Codes of Islam knew nothing of a constitutional government. The people as such never had, and never expected to have, a share in the rule of their own land. Now, for the first time, they are made conversant with the novel and thrilling influences and privileges of democracy. It is not strange that they should feel somewhat bewildered in this new situation, and should demand for themselves an

ever-increasing modicum of political rights in the government of their own land.

A peculiar incongruity in the present situation is seen in the fact that these people of India have little or no sympathy with the kind of government which is being gradually extended to them. Ultimately they do not ask for representative institutions, which will give them a share in the government of their own land. What they really seek is absolute control of the affairs of their own country. The Brahman, who constitutes only five per cent of the community, believes that he has been divinely appointed to rule the country, and would withhold the franchise from all others. The Sudra—the Bourgeois of India—would no more think of giving the ballot to the fifty million Pariahs of the land than he would give it to his dog. It is the British power that has introduced, and now maintains, the equality of rights and privileges for all the people of the land. And it is a serious question whether the British should abandon India knowing that they would thus deliver the common people of the land to the very untender mercies of the classes.

There are two distinct parties among the present political aspirants in India—the Extremists, or Nationalists, and the Moderates. The former are only a microscopic few, under the leadership of such radicals as Messrs. Tilak, Arabindo Ghose, and Bepin Chunder Pal. The battle cry of these men is “India for the Indians.” They will have no compromise with the foreigner, and are willing to use all methods and weapons of boycott and bomb to drive the White man from the country.

The Moderates, on the other hand, constitute the overwhelming majority of the educated classes. They also want India for the Indians; but they do not mean anything more by this than colonial independence, within the British empire. Their ambition is to be like Canada or Australia, controlling their own affairs, and yet enjoying the prestige of the empire. Such men as the Honorable Mr. Gokhale, and the Hon. V. Krishnaswamy Iyer are among the leaders of this party. Their platform permits of the use of only constitutional methods to attain their end, an end which

seems perfectly reasonable and attainable within a no distant date.

Are they prepared to enter upon this inheritance at the present time? I do not believe it. It was less than two months ago that Mr. Gokhale himself expressed his opinion in the following words:

The whole question after all was a question of character, capacity and qualification. They must realize that their main difficulties were in themselves. The present Hindu-Mohammedan agitation had drawn the pointed attention of everybody to the absence of any real unity in the country and had shown how deep and wide the fissures were. Their average character and capacity would have to be considerably raised before they could hope to bear the responsibilities of any real measure of self-government.

I believe that the honorable gentleman in these words, expresses the conviction of nine-tenths of the intelligent natives of that country. The great problem with India, today, as it is its chief duty, is not to seek more political rights, but rather to qualify itself, in a thousand ways, for the wise exercises of the rights already enjoyed by it. Well known prominent Indians have said to me more than once,

Sir, we are afraid that the government has conferred upon us these political privileges too rapidly, and before we have learned wisdom enough to rightly exercise them.

Personally, I feel, that the aim of the Moderates for colonial rights of self-government within the British Empire is a noble ambition, and should be sought after with diligence. The responsibility involved in this should bear heavily upon the minds of the people; and they should seek diligently for those moral and social qualities which will enable them to exercise well these rights. India's need, today, is found at this very point. There is intelligence and culture enough among the highest classes for any amount of self-government. What is needed is moral stamina, social sanity, and public spirit; without which they can never be a *nation*, they can never be worthy of the name of patriots nor can they be capable of wise self-government. This blessing of self-rule will come to them in the day of

their strength. They could not possibly be under the tutelage and training of a better government than the British for the pursuance of this end.

V. THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION.

There are certain facts which stand forth prominently in connection with the religious condition of India.

The first is the mean character of the daily religious practices of the common people. One thing must be said to their credit, however, namely, that in their nature they are the most religious people on earth. From time immemorial the great thinkers of India have been deeply and pervasively religious in their thought. Their speculations concerning divine and human things have been most serious and lofty, and their religious philosophies and systems of ontology have been among the most profound that the world has known.

And among the common people there is generally a passion after the divine, which one misses entirely in the West. They have been truly called a "God-intoxicated people." In the West, religious sentiment and practice is hardly more than an incident in life; in India it is the center round which the whole life moves.

Nevertheless, down from that high philosophy and from this highly surcharged religious nature they have descended to the most debasing idolatry and the most inane and elaborate system of ritual and all-embracing superstition. It is a significant fact, also, that of the *shastras*, or sacred writings of Hinduism, the earliest are the best, and the latest are the worst and most unworthy of the people. The men of culture in India today, shun the *Puranas* and the *Tantras* of more modern times and wisely hark back to the earliest pre-Christian writing of their sages. The modern, "Holy men" of India, or at least ninety-nine per cent of them, are ignorant, superstitious and immoral. There are five and a half millions of them; and because are they regarded as the incarnate religious ideals of the people, their example and very existence is one of the supreme curses of India.

Another religious fact of significance is the debasing influence of Hinduism upon other faiths that come into close contact with it. Hinduism is a mighty absorbent. It takes into itself much of every religion which comes near to it. It absorbed, almost in its entirety, the Buddhistic faith and gave to its arch enemy, the Buddah, a place in its pantheon as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu.

It has also touched, with its grimy hand, the Mohammedan faith, which it has robbed of much of its pristine purity; it has added to it a considerable part of its gross superstition. It has taken into itself also, without the slightest qualification, the demonolatry of South India. In its usual way it fraternized with the aboriginal cult of the Dravidians, adopted their devils, married these to its gods and invited the people to follow their demons into the richer Brahmanical faith. It has also taken full cognizance of Christianity, and has appropriated some of its thoughts and doctrines and imbibed here and there some of its spirit. The popular element of modern Hinduism is the cult of Faith, or *bhakti*. This, doubtless, originated in the Christian era; and there are many reasons to believe that it found its inception in the Christian doctrines of Faith and of the Incarnation.

The most significant characteristic of the modern religious situation is the presence of a militant Christianity in the land.

Today there are one million Christians connected with the Protestant church, and three millions altogether bearing the name of Christ. It must be confessed that this (which is only one per cent of the population) is not as large an ingathering as we might have expected. The difficulty has been in the elaborate ceremonial and arrogant ecclesiasticism for which Christianity has stood in the past in that country. It has also been too much an effort on Western lines with Western ideals and forms and methods. Present missionary efforts are more ethical and less ecclesiastical, more Oriental in their spirit and aim, and less arrogantly Western. Indeed, the missionary of today is keenly sensible of the fact that his faith, which first found its origin and interpretation in the East, but which has since been largely dominated by Western

thought and ideals, must be brought back to its oriental interpretation, and must be rehabilitated in India with oriental ideas and must find its expression in that life and method of thought which is so essential to the East, before it will ever become the dominant and national faith of that people. Christianity will ultimately take possession of the mind and heart of India; but it will not be as a Western faith, which it has become through our interpretation and life-expression.

And the most encouraging thing, in substantiation of this hope, is the growing prevalence of the Christ ideal in that land. While many men there antagonize our faith, they look with appreciation and affection upon that ideal of life, which Christ himself incarnated; and they find infinite comfort in pursuing their own ways of interpreting and following Him. A Brahman friend of mine recently translated into the Tamil tongue that wonderful mystical book of Christian devotion—Thomas à Kempis' "Imitation of Christ"; and another Hindu gentleman published the same, serially, in his monthly magazine for Hindu readers.

Indeed, so far do Christian ideas already dominate the thought of India that a multitude of the cultured men of that land have learned to think their own Hindu thoughts largely in terms of Christian interpretation. They defend their own Hindu doctrine from a Christian standpoint and in downright Christian accent. He who lives in India can easily perceive that the difference between these men and the orthodox Hindu pundit is wider, in many respects, than the gulf which separates the educated Brahman from the Christian missionary.

This leavening influence upon Hindu thought and ideals comes largely through the forty Christian colleges and the multitude of high schools and other missionary institutions which are rapidly building up a new system of thought and a new basis of philosophy in that great land. They are teaching the fundamental fact that no philosophy and no religious system of thought which is not built upon Christ can abide, or is possessed of permanent value to any people. The famous Chunder Sen well realized this fact, though he

did not enter the Christian Church, because, as he said, the Christian Church is too Western. But he was able to exclaim in his own impassioned way that,—

It is not the British empire, it is not the Queen Empress of India that rules this land. Jesus rules India; he is worthy to wear this diadem, and he shall have it.

And as to the work which Christian missionaries have wrought in that land, toward this noble consummation, and for the upbuilding and the regeneration of India in all that is beautiful, true and righteous, British statesmen bear universal and hearty testimony. Even fifty years ago Lord John Lawrence, one of the noblest souls that ever went out to the East, made this general acknowledgment:

“I believe,” said he, “notwithstanding all that Great Britain has done to benefit the people of India, the Christian missionaries have done more than all other agencies combined.”

And there are few ways in which the influence of Christianity is more markedly manifest than in the modern movements which have come into existence during the last century. Hinduism itself has abandoned, and is continuing to put away, many of its grossest evils—evils of which it has become ashamed under the growing modern light of civilization and of Christian teaching. Hinduism is to-day a very different thing from what it was even a third of a century ago, when I went to that land.

The modern religious reform movements are most encouraging signs of the new convictions and of the deep condition of unrest among the people themselves concerning their faith. The Arya Somaj, the Prathanei Somaj, and the various divisions of the Brahmo Somaj, each in its own way, and with different emphasis, reveal the wide-spreading dissatisfaction with an orthodox Hinduism that is both debasing and moribund.

Theosophy, also, has grown recently into high favor among a multitude of the educated; not because it poses as a separate faith, which it does not, but because it claims to be the cement, or the harmonizer of faiths. It teaches that

all roads lead to Rome, that all faiths are adequate for salvation, and lead to ultimate bliss!

Thus, from whatever standpoint we consider the great Indian Peninsula and its wonderful people, we see that it has entered upon new and troublous times. The ferment of unrest is working mightily in every department of its life, and a new India is coming out of the process, an India which will be mightier, because wiser and better, than in any period of the past, and an India which will take her place, as never before, in the councils of the nations, wielding her own mighty influence in the shaping of the destiny of our race.